

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks herewith, which place the application into condition for allowance. The present amendment is being made to facilitate prosecution of the application. Applicant submits that the present amendment does not require further search or consideration and respectfully request entry of this After-Final Amendment.

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 1, 2, and 4-17 are currently pending. Claim 3 is hereby canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Claims 1, 11, 12, 15, 16 and 17 are independent. Claims 1, 4, 11, 12, 13 and 15-17 are hereby amended. Changes to claims are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §101, §102, §103, or §112. Rather, these changes are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicants are entitled.

II. REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 1, 2, 9, 10 and 14-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,793,891 to Takahashi et al. Claims 3-8 and 11-13 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claim 1 has been amended to include allowable claim 3, which is hereby canceled. Claims 11 and 12 have been presented in independent form. Claims 15-17 have been amended to recite similar features to allowable claim 3. Therefore, Applicant submits that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

Applicant submits that the present amendment does not require further search or consideration and respectfully request entry of this After-Final Amendment. In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is believed that all of the claims in this application are patentable and Applicant respectfully requests early passage to issue of the present application.

Please charge any additional fees that may be needed, and credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

Respectfully submitted,
FROMMER LAWRENCE & HAUG LLP
Attorneys for Applicant

By Thomas F. Presson
Thomas F. Presson
Reg. No. 41,442
(212) 588-0800